

Maine State Planning Office

Our Mission:

- The State Planning Office provides the information and analyses to help decision-makers make decisions about Maine's economy, resources, and governance.

Our Statutory Duties:

1. Coordinate the development of the State's economy and energy resources with the conservation of its natural resources;
2. Provide technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature by undertaking special studies and plans and preparing policy alternatives;
3. Provide technical assistance to towns and regions;
4. Conduct continuing economic analyses, including economic forecasting.

We continued to protect Maine's legacy of land and water resources.

- ✧ The Land for Maine's Future staff is currently managing over 45 projects including seven farmland projects, four water access projects, and 31 conservation/recreation projects.
- ✧ During this period, the LMF Board approved funding for 23 projects comprising 214,000 acres, totaling \$9.54 million. To date the Board has allocated seventy percent of the \$50 million land bond approved by voters in 1999.
- ✧ Partnering with other organizations, LMF closed on projects totaling 17,237 acres, with over 68 linear miles of water frontage. These projects, which represent \$4.4 million of LMF funds, drew outside investment of \$4.6 million. Many help to increase public access for outdoor recreation such as Spednic Lake, a St. Croix River recreational corridor that includes a legendary, 50-mile canoeing route.
- ✧ Beginning with Habitat maps wildlife habitats and natural resource areas. Maps have been developed for 98 towns and staff from SPO and other state agencies has met with more than 60 communities this spring and summer to assist them to use the maps.
- ✧ SPO is developing and updating the maps of public conservation land holdings that justify Maine's federal funding for outdoor recreation.

We conducted economic analysis and technical research to assist Maine businesses.

- ✧ Through 30 & 1000, we documented the creation of new jobs, the development of new business products and services, and return on state investment (in some instances 6:1).
- ✧ SPO provided the Governor and Legislature with a picture of the economic impact of Maine's dairy industry on our state's economy leading to funding to provide some relief to dairy farmers.
- ✧ SPO is providing staff support to the Governor's Blaine House Conference on the Creative Economy to help economic developers and the cultural sectors understand the impact the arts and cultural heritage have on attracting human capital and investment.
- ✧ SPO is providing staff support to the Governor's Blaine House Conference on Maine's Natural Resource Industries to develop an agenda for sustaining these industries.
- ✧ The state will acquire the Old Town landfill to help support one of Maine's paper companies and provide needed solid waste disposal capacity to accommodate economic growth.
- ✧ SPO continues to provide web-accessible data for over 80 economic indicators of the state economy and to publish the annual year-end review of state economic performance.



Tumbledown Mountain, Mt Blue, protected by Land for Maine's Future Program

"The State Planning Office is also helping develop the Governor's fiscal reform proposal."

We coordinated the development of state energy policy.

- ✧ The state's Energy Resources Council is fully operational and departments of Maine state government now have a formal, legal mechanism to coordinate state energy policy. SPO staffs the council and developed a directory of state energy programs.
- ✧ The Governor has detailed information on heating and transportation fuel supplies, heating assistance availability, energy emergency preparedness, and other issues to help deal with bitter cold, high prices, and potentially low inventories.
- ✧ SPO surveyed over 90 suppliers of home heating fuel to provide weekly reports of average statewide and regional fuel prices during the 2002-03 heating season.

We began important work that will restructure how government services are delivered.

- ✧ SPO captured and translated the Governor's ideas about municipal service districts into legislation.
- ✧ SPO is assisting the Governor on two projects that will enhance the delivery of local services through efficiencies; municipal and K-12 education.
- ✧ SPO is assisting the deliberations of the Governor's working group that is examining how state government delivers its economic development services.
- ✧ SPO implemented the new, innovative Regional Challenge Grant program and awarded the first two grants to coalitions of municipalities looking to jointly deliver municipal services. A third grant is under consideration.

We continued to make progress to enhance Maine's communities, stem sprawl, and protect our working landscapes.



A traditional neighborhood with compact development and pedestrian friendly streets, proximate to schools and services.

- ✧ Participating agencies finished a farmland preservation strategic plan for Maine to more effectively target state efforts to protect farmland. SPO provided \$25,000 toward the effort.
- ✧ Ground has been broken on Maine's first contemporary traditional neighborhood in southern Maine.
- ✧ A survey conducted by SPO of recent homebuyers in mid-coast Maine demonstrates a market demand for traditional neighborhoods in that region.
- ✧ SPO assisted the city of Rockland with analyzing options for managing their municipal fish pier.
- ✧ At the request of the Governor, SPO teamed state education officials to work with communities slated to receive school construction funding to ensure that each community considered locations proximate to residential neighborhoods. SPO has worked with communities in siting nearly 20 schools.
- ✧ A working waterfront coalition has been launched comprised of public and private organization and agencies interested in enhancing commercial fishing access to coastal waters. SPO helped its formation and provides support.

We administered federal dollars.

- ✧ Close to \$500,000 in federal grant funds has been distributed to grassroots partners throughout the Gulf of Maine for coastal and riverine habitat restoration.
- ✧ With help from DEP, SPO is implementing a swim beach monitoring program with funds from EPA giving visitors in 13 communities information about water quality on any given day to judge whether it is safe to swim.
- ✧ Maine's coastal zone management grant application for \$2.7 million for coastal management in FY 04 was filed.
- ✧ The US EPA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have approved Maine's coastal non point source pollution plan paving the way for \$500,000 in new federal funding for coastal pollution projects.
- ✧ The Maine Commission for Community Service awarded federal funding for AmeriCorps volunteers to help citizens access preventative health care in rural Maine and to provide career-related mentoring to middle- and high-school aged youth (note: these projects may be affected by proposed federal cuts to AmeriCorps funding).



A stretch of beach in Maine

We provided grants to Maine communities.

- ✧ The Maine Coastal Program awarded \$45,000 in grants to towns and nonprofit watershed groups to identify and fix sources of coastal pollution.
- ✧ SPO has selected 35 projects for recycling capital investment grants and 28 projects for household hazardous waste infrastructure grants for municipalities and regional recycling programs. \$800,000 is available in this round, funded from the environmental bond approved by voters last November.
- ✧ 15 communities received grants to create or update comprehensive plans or to write land use ordinances.
- ✧ SPO distributed \$10,000 in right-of-way discovery grants to the towns of Camden, Winterport, Jonesport, and North Haven to help resolve conflicts around disputed rights-of-way to the coast and to document municipal interest in public access points.

We assisted Maine communities.

- ✧ SPO conducted 25 workshops with over 1,000 municipal officials and community members, on topics ranging from legal issues in codes enforcement administration to managing recyclables to shoreland zoning to land conservation, to land use planning.
- ✧ 98 local code enforcement officers took certification exams; 57 were certified in one more areas.
- ✧ SPO field over 1,000 calls for general technical assistance in floodplain management.
- ✧ SPO funded and helped develop 26 public collection programs for mercury and other household hazardous wastes giving one-third of Maine's population a place to dispose these materials.
- ✧ Maine communities now have a manual for developing impact fee ordinances.
- ✧ 163 AmeriCorps volunteers, who provided community services across the state to meet environmental, human, and public safety needs, were graduated.

"Just under one-half of SPO resources are distributed to towns and other organizations in grants and transfers."